

Mercy Seat (*Hilasterion*)

by Domenic Marbaniang



The priests rested the Ark of Testimony inside. Thick darkness filled the place as they pulled the screen against this part which was called the Holiest. From then on, it would be visited only once a year on the Day of Atonement. But tradition tells us that the place was never dark since the Glory God came and dwelled between the Cherubim upon the golden Mercy Seat.

I often ask this question why God did that. Was it even necessary for the Lord of the heavens to come and dwell in a tent of linen and skins, within a veil only once visited through the year? The Tabernacle was truly a shadow of things to come but the presence of God was not; His presence was real and gave meaning to all. Still, it anticipated things to come.

Beneath the Mercy Seat, within the Ark of Testimony, was the Testimony (the two tables of stone) on which God had written the 10 commandments with His own finger (Ex. 25:16); it's, therefore, called the Ark of Testimony. It was God's code of covenant with His people; but it was not the means of His relating with them. It could not be. Therefore, the Mercy Seat called *kapporeth* (covering or blotting off) in the Hebrew and *hilasterion* (reconciliation or propitiation) in the Greek: it is the place where God meets with man. The high priest could only go within the veil once a year but not without blood. Christ our High Priest entered once into the heavens with His own blood securing for us eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11). He is, therefore, our *hilasterion* (Rom. 3: 25). He is our propitiation.

*The Mercy Seat blot off the code of testimony against us; on the Ark it stood over and preceded the tables of stone; on the Cross, He stood over and became the reason for our acceptance despite of our sins (Col 2:14). He is our Mediator, the High Priest, God's Eternal Son (Heb. 9:15).

*The Mercy Seat was the dwelling place of God. God's Glory rested between the Cherubim. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9); the Church, His Body, is the habitation of God in Him through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22).

*The Mercy Seat was the source of Light within the veil. And, in Christ we see the Light of the Glory of God reflected from His face (John 1:14; 2Cor.4:6; Col.1:12,13; John 8:12).

*The Mercy Seat was a place of mercy. Can any man approach God, even in prayer with demands from his own soul? The Pharisee was not justified in his boastings but the publican was because he came to God seeking mercy. It is only through Christ and in Christ that we can come before the Father and receive forgiveness and grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16).

Deep within the inner recesses of my heart
A Glory beams with endless radiance
From sin and death He has set me apart
My soul is joyful, can there be silence!
I will sing of His mercies and tell of His grace.
I'm changed by His glory, beholding His face.

God's blessing be with all who love Him!